



16th Australasian **Botanic Guides Conference**

*Beauty rich and rare*  
Kings Park and Botanic Garden Western Australia

**16 - 20 September 2019**

### **WALK SUMMARY: WALK WA**

Western Australia is a vast State, both in its land area (2.65 million sq km) and its plant biodiversity. It represents approximately one third of Australia's total land mass and is home to about 13,000 plant species, which is more than half the total for Australia.

This walk guides you through the Botanic Gardens via a series of beds displaying plants from the State's cool temperate regions, the Mediterranean-climate South West, the drier Mallee, Mulga and Desert Regions, and the tropical Kimberley region in the State's far north.

The journey showcases each region's natural and climatic features, its plants and their unusual features such as bird-pollination, as well as the people and history associated with the botanical and geographical exploration of each region.

The **South West Region** was the first area of Australia to be recognised as a Biodiversity hotspot and contains about 8000 plant species and over sixty percent are endemic to the region. Examples include:

- Kangaroo paws, such as the Red and Green kangaroo paw, *Anigozanthos manglesii* (the State's floral emblem) and the striking Black kangaroo paw *Macropidia fuliginosa*.
- The Mountain bells, *Darwinia* spp., many of which have highly restricted distributions in the wild, and the spectacular Qualup bell, *Pimelia physodes*, rare in the wild and, until recently, impossible to propagate.

The **Mallee Region** is drier than the South West and is home to over 200 species of mallee eucalypts, many having beautiful buds, flowers and fruit. Some plant species here are:

- The recently discovered Square-fruited mallet, *Eucalyptus brandiana*, with its leathery leaves and special connections with Kings Park science.
- The Bungalbin tetraheca, *Tetrateca aphylla*, the small rare plant that helped save a mountain range from mining development.
- Prostrate banksias unique to WA.

The extensive **Mulga and Desert Regions** are remarkably well vegetated despite their very harsh, hot climate. Plant species growing in the Mulga and Desert gardens include:

- Mulga wattle, *Acacia aneura*, a tall shrub characteristic of these regions, now recognised to comprise around a dozen distinct species
- an abundance of smaller shrubs such as eremophilas and grevilleas.
- Spinifex grass, *Triodia* spp, one of the most widespread grasses in Australia.
- The famous Everlasting Daisies – annuals that transform the Mulga Region after good winter rains,
- Some intriguing eucalypts, including Ramel's mallee, *E. rameliana* and the Large-fruited mallee, *E. youngiana*.

In the **Kimberley Region**, located in the State's far north, the climate varies from hot, wet tropical monsoon to the dry interior. Plants featured include:

- Screw-pine, *Pandanus aquaticus*, with its aerial prop roots,
- A rare Mountain White gum *E. mooreana*,
- The iconic Boab, *Adansonia gregorii*, and the story of its relocation to the Park.

This walk presents information and stories about the plants, their discovery, the successful propagation and conservation of threatened species, and some fascinating, heart-warming and, at times, heart-wrenching stories of some of the early botanists, explorers and plant collectors.